

Message Text

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63

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04

RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 OMB-01 AID-20 NIC-01 DRC-01

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O P 060020Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2365

INFO CINCSOUTH PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L GUATEMALA 1308

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, GT

SUBJECT: ELECTION REPORT NUMBER 23

1. PR "OLD GUARD" LEADER MARIO FUENTES PIERUCCINI, WHO WAS HIS PARTY'S UNSUCCESSFUL PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE IN 1970, ASKED TO SEE US THIS MORNING(MARCH 6). HIS MESSAGE WAS THAT THE APPARENTLY CALM SITUATION BELIED A GREAT AMOUNT OF UNDER-THE-SURFACE TENSION AND THAT THERE WAS TREMENDOUS RESENTMENT AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT'S DECISION TO NEGATE THE RESULTS OF THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS, WHICH HE WAS CONVINCED RIOS MONTT HAD WON BY AT LEAST 80,000 VOTES. FUENTES SAID HE WORRIED THAT A LAUGERUD GOVERNMENT WHICH ASSUMED OFFICE UNDER THE CLOUD OF GROSS AND MASSIVE FRAUD WOULD OF NECESSITY BE A WEAK GOVERNMENT AND THAT IT WOULD CONFRONT MANY PROBLEMS CREATED BY A VIRULENT, VIOLENT LEFT, WHICH WOULD BE ABLE TO BUILD ON THE VERY GREAT MOUNT OF DISSATISFACTION WHICH WAS BOUND TO RESULT FROM A FRUSTRATION OF POPULAR WILL.

2. FUENTES PIERUCCINI SAID HE WAS SURE THAT THE SENIOR MILITARY COMMANDERS KNEW WHAT THE REAL OUTCOME OF THE ELECTIONS HAD BEEN AND THAT CERTAIN ELEMENTS WITHIN THE ARMY, FOR EXAMPLE GENERALS PERALTA AND SOSA AVILA, WERE SPREADING THIS WORD AS
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WIDELY AND DEEPLY AS POSSIBLE THROUGHOUT THE OFFICER CORPS.

FUENTES PIERUCCINI SAID THAT AS A SENIOR DISINTERESTED POLITICIAN, HE WANTED TO PASS THIS MESSAGE TO THE AMERICAN EMBASSY WITH THE HOPE THAT WE WOULD AGREE WITH HIS ANALYSIS AND PUT IN A WORD WITH THE GOVERNMENT. HE SAID IT WAS THE PRESIDENT AND THE ARMY WHO COULD MAKE THE FINAL DECISION. WE TOLD HIM THAT THE US POSITION HAD BEEN AND WAS THAT WE BELIEVE IT IS IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF GUATEMALA AND THE UNITED STATES FOR GUATEMALA TO HAVE FREE AND OPEN ELECTIONS AND A CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT. HOWEVER, WE WERE OBSERVERS OF THE POLITICAL SCENE, AND IT WAS NOT OUR PLACE TO INTERFERE IN THE MANNER HE SUGGESTED. WE NOTED HIS ANALYSIS THAT IT WAS THE GOVERNMENT AND, MOST OF ALL, PRESIDENT ARANA AND THE ARMY WHO WOULD MAKE THE FINAL DECISIONS IN THIS DIFFICULT SITUATION.

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